

CHAP, xir *INFLUENCE OF MOTHER-KIN*  
ON RELIGION 203

inheritance transmitted.<sup>1</sup> The father has no kinship with his children, who belong to their mother's clan; what he earns goes to his own matriarchal stock, and at his death his bones are deposited in the cromlech of his mother's kin. In Jowai he neither lives nor eats In his wife's house, but visits it only after dark. In the veneration of ancestors, which Is the foundation of the tribal piety, the primal ancestress (*Ka law bet*) and her brother are the only persons regarded. The flat memorial stones set up to perpetuate the memory of the dead are called after the woman who represents the clan (*maw kynthel*), and the standing stones ranged behind them are dedicated to the male kinsmen on the mother's side. In harmony with this scheme of ancestor worship, the other spirits to whom propitiation is offered are mainly female, though here male personages also figure. The powers of sickness and death are all female, and these are those most frequently worshipped. The two protectors of the household are goddesses, though with them Is also revered the first father of the clan, *U Thawlang*. Priestesses assist at all sacrifices, and the male officiants are only their deputies; In one Important state, *JKhyrim*, the High Priestess and actual head of the State is a woman, who combines in her person sacerdotal and regal functions." \* Thus amongst the Khasis of the present day the

<sup>1</sup> "The Khasi saying is, \* *long jaid* members of the family" (*pp. cit.* p. 88).  
*naka kynthel*<sup>1</sup> (from the woman sprang "The rule amongst the Ivhasis is that the youngest daughter 'holds' the ing descent, count from the -mother religion, '*ka bat ka mam*.' Her house only; they speak of a family of brothers is called, \* *ka iing*

*smgj* and it is here  
 and sisters, who are the great grand-  
 the family assemble  
 children of one great grandmother, as  
 performance of the family  
*shi kpok* which, being literally trans-  
 Hers is, therefore, the  
 lated, is one womb, *i.e.* the issue of  
 family property,  
 one womb. The man is nobody" because it is  
 she whose duty it is to  
 (P. R. T. Gurclon, *The Khasis*, p. 82).  
 ceremonies, and  
 "All land acquired by inheritance must  
 ancestors" (*op.*  
 follow the Khasi law of entail, by which  
 property descends from the mother to  
 Introduction  
 the youngest daughter, and again from  
 by Major P. R. T.  
 the latter to her youngest daughter.  
 Sir C. J. Lyall  
 Ancestral landed property must there-  
 many years among  
 fore be always owned by women. The  
 studied their customs,  
 male members of the family may culli-  
 evidence on which  
 vate such lands, but they must carry  
 see especially pp.  
 all the produce to the house of their  
 82 *sqq.* ^ 88, 106  
 mother, who will divide it amongst the  
*sej.*, 121, 150, of

that the members of  
 to witness her  
 ceremonies.  
 largest share of the  
 perform the family  
 propitiate the family  
*cit.* p. 83).  
<sup>2</sup> Sir C. J. Lyall, in his  
 to *The Khasis*,  
 Gurdon, pp. xxiii. *sej.*  
 himself lived for  
 the Khasis and  
 For the details of the  
 his summary is based  
 63 *syq.*, 68 *\$\$.*, 76,  
*sqq.*, 109 *sqq.*, 112